

In recent years, parts of Downtown Fort Worth have been immensely successful in attracting people back to the central city to live, work, play, shop, and learn. This renaissance of Downtown is in part attributable to the authentic urban quality of these areas of Downtown. This urban quality has been preserved in some buildings, streets, and corridors such as along Main Street in Sundance Square, and it has been recreated in other places such as Sundance East, the Firestone and Hillside neighborhoods, and the Fort Worth Outlet Center (Tandy).

Almost without exception, these more successful areas of Downtown are those that have implemented the urban characteristics described in these design guidelines. **These guidelines are designed to attain several objectives:**

1. The Street Corridor Must Be a Comfortable Place for People, Cars, and Transit

For Downtown to attract the needed daytime and nighttime populations, we must provide a means to accommodate access and parking convenient to shopping, entertainment, and employment. High traffic volumes are acceptable so long as it is calm traffic that is not threatening to safe pedestrian movement. The Street is seen as a corridor for moving cars, parked cars, walkways, and building edges. On-street parking (parallel and head-in) is encouraged because it supports retail activity while defining a safe walkway edge for pedestrians.



PURPOSE AND INTRODUCTION

2. Walkway Areas Should Function As Lineal Parks

The walkway system of Downtown should work as a grid of pedestrian friendly spaces with attractive pavement, landscaping, shade, protection from moving traffic, benches, public art, and information. The short 200' blocks in Downtown help to create more lineal feet of walkway and parking area, while dispersing and calming traffic. Parked cars, street trees, and building edges create a safe comfortable sense of enclosure for pedestrian movement, outdoor dining and other walkway activities. This lineal system of walkways is complemented by an existing and proposed system of parks and plazas.



3. Maintain the Urban Building Edge and Encourage Street Level Activity

Buildings should face the street with little or no setback. Ground level uses should be retail, entertainment, customer services, or residential and other uses that generate continuous activity on the street level. Buildings at the lower levels should incorporate windows and transparency, prominent entryways, canopies, and a horizontal rhythm of architectural detail.



4. Gateways and Parkway Streets Should Link Downtown Areas and Provide Linkage to Adjoining Districts

A system of gateway / parkway streets has been identified that are designed to provide a beautiful image for Downtown users and to link pedestrian, transit, and vehicular movement to adjoining districts and greenbelts.



5. Diversity and Contrast Are Encouraged

These guidelines are designed to encourage a consistency of urban quality, but they are not designed to create sameness. Downtown, Inc. encourages a diversity of architecture, landscaping, street furniture, plazas, and other urban features. In some instances pavement type or street furniture will be used to unify a corridor or district, such as the red brick in the Sundance / Main Street area. These guidelines mainly address form, scale, and quality of space rather than design style. Historic buildings and new modern buildings are both important to Downtown.



6. Adjoining Districts and Neighborhoods

Adjoining neighborhoods and City Districts that are very integral to the ongoing success of the City and Downtown include the near Main Street corridor, Samuels Avenue Neighborhood, the I-35 corridor, Butler / I.M. Terrell School area, near Southeast Neighborhood, Medical District (Fort Worth South), and the Cultural District.

The Urban Design Committee has a particular concern about the Samuels Avenue Neighborhood which is located immediately to the northeast of Downtown. This neighborhood is distinctly different with the predominately lower density residential uses (north of Nash Elementary School). There are also numerous historic resources and places.

PURPOSE AND INTRODUCTION

Economic pressures could cause incompatible in-fill to occur in this historic area, unless a coordinated plan and set of zoning / design guidelines are developed for the Samuels Ave. area. It is recommended that the City in cooperation with residents and stakeholders of the Samuels Avenue Neighborhood develop the needed policies. Downtown Fort Worth, Inc. should lend its support and leadership as needed to help the process.

Fortunately, the other adjoining districts seem to have established groups and / or planning efforts underway to assure their success and highest and best redevelopment. Downtown Fort Worth, Inc. and the City should continue to lend their support to these efforts also.

The Downtown Area Defined

For purposes of these urban design guidelines, Downtown is defined as bounded by the Trinity River / Forest Park Boulevard on the west, the Trinity River / Weatherford Street corridor on the north, the Santa Fe Railroad on the east, and the new alignment of I-30 on the south.

For purposes of planning and describing urban design issues and opportunities, the Urban Design Committee defined twelve (12) Downtown Planning Zones (See map page 8-9). Land use and urban design issues for each zone are explained in more detail in Section 8. The general urban design guidelines contained herein are intended to be considered for all twelve of these planning zones.